

Physiography of Rajasthan and Distribution of Newly Emerged Census Towns

***Omprakash**

Abstract

Physiographically Rajasthan state stretches into two of India's major physiographic divisions mainly the great Plains and Central Highlands. Physiography has been denied as a strong reason for the urbanization process, development, infrastructure progress, and industrialization. Transport network has come out as a strong determinant to the emergence of census towns in the state.

Keywords: Rajasthan, Physiography, Census, town, distribution, diversity.

Introduction

Since from early civilizations, population distribution was influenced by the physiography, which in turn affects relief, altitude, climate, water availability, resources, etc. The favorable physiography attracts a higher number of people because livelihood opportunities are higher in these areas.

Figure 1 shows the physiographic diversity of the state of Rajasthan. The physiography of the region determined the distribution and density of the population. Physiographically Rajasthan state stretches into two of India's major physiographic divisions mainly the great Plains and Central Highlands. The area lying west of the Aravalli is known as Western sandy plain, occupies the western part of the Great Plains, whereas the area east of the Aravalli falls in the Northern part of the central Highlands. Both these major divisions in Rajasthan are marked by a variety of physiography and relief features. The Western Sandy Plain is a wild expanse of windblown sand poorly watered and sterile. The Eastern portion of this is known as the Thar Desert. Prickly grass and other desert plants are the only vegetation here. The region comprises Bikaner, Barmer, Churu, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Nagaur, Hanumangarh, Shri Ganganagar, Pali, Sirohi, Sikar and Jhunjhunu district and contains about 58% of the area and 30% of the population of entire state. Eastern Boundary is marked by a 50 cm rainfall line as well as by great Indian watershed (Aravalli Hills). The region flow generally from east to west and north to south many small scattered hillocks are marking the Western edge. The most important river flowing in the region is the Looney which rises in the Aravalli in south-west of Ajmer and flows towards the south-west. The Western sandy plain is subdivided into arid (Marusthali) and semi-arid plain.

Dune free tract of Jaisalmer, Barmer, and Bikaner where limestone and sandstone rocks expose here belong to Jurassic and Eocene period. Short intermittent and discontinued rivers, transverse sand

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dunes. Figure 1 shows the physiography of Rajasthan, where newly emerged census towns have been overlayed on the physiography of the state. The western sandy plain shows a very low number of newly emerged census towns. Few towns can be seen along the Indira Gandhi Canal area such as census towns of Ganganagar and Bikaner districts. Ganganagar alone saw the emergence of six new towns. The western part of the state is low on the emergence of new census towns.

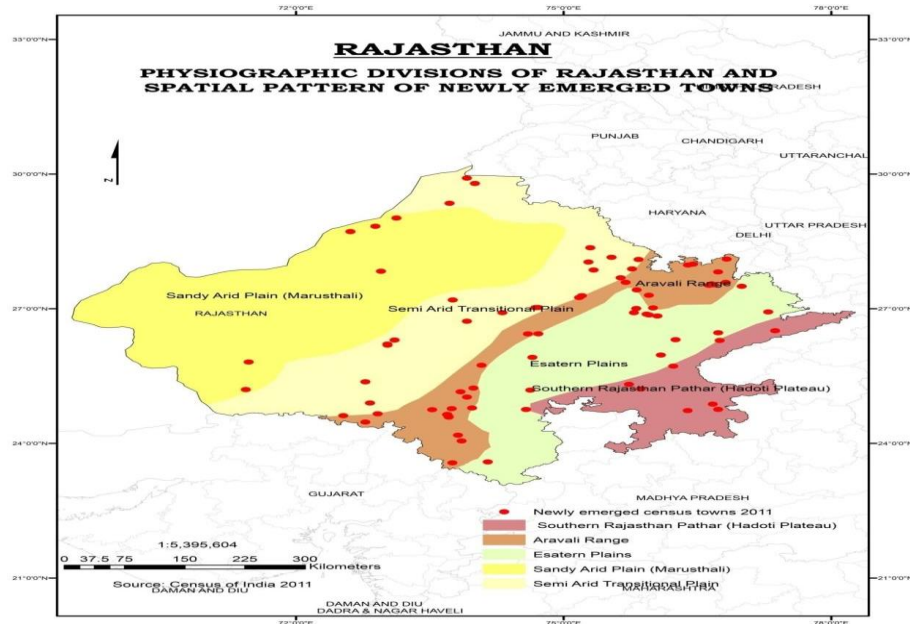


Figure 1: Physiographic Divisions of Rajasthan and Spatial Pattern of Newly Emerged Towns

Semi-arid or transitional plain of Rajasthan Bangar includes the Luni basin, Shekhawati region, Nagauri upland, and Ghaghar plain. Jhunjhunu, Sirohi, Nagaur show the maximum emergence of new census towns in this region. The Aravalli Range running across the Rajasthan like a curve from South West to North East. Aravalli Range is remarkable in being perhaps the oldest folded mountain in the world. Aravalli Range can be subdivided into the North-Eastern hill tracts, the central Aravali Range, the Mewar Rocky region and the Bhorat plateau and Abu block region. In general hilly areas of any country or a state are devoid of population or urbanized areas but this is not the case with Rajasthan and we can see an abundance concentration of newly emerged census towns around and along the Aravali Range of Rajasthan. The first reason for it is that the Aravalli Range are not continuous and being the oldest they are eroded and are of low elevation. That is why it is not that difficult to establish Habitat along the Aravalli Range of Rajasthan. The second factor of high concentration of

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census towns along the range is that the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor passes through it. Thereby, the majority of the industrial hubs and investment regions are situated in this area, which has provided economic opportunities to nearby rural areas. A third reason can be mining opportunities in the Aravallis, there are a lot of mining-based towns especially in the southern part of the state, around Udaipur, Dungarpur, etc.

Eastern plain of Rajasthan includes Chambal basin, Banas basin, and middle Mahi plane. The scattered distribution of new urbanization can be seen in this plain of Rajasthan. south-east Rajasthan plateau is also called Hadoti plateau which can be subdivided into Vindhayan scarpland and Deccan Lava plateau. The region is not rich in terms of the new urbanization process. Thereby, we can say that physiography has been denied as a strong reason for the urbanization process, development, infrastructure progress, and industrialization. Transport network has come out as a strong determinant to the emergence of census towns in the state.

Table 1: Region Wise Distribution of Newly Emerged Census Towns (Rajasthan)

Region	Number of Census Towns
Aravalli Range	32
Semi Arid Transitional plain	19
Eastern plain	14
Southern Rajasthan Pathar (Hadoti plateau)	8
Sandy Arid plain (Marusthali)	6

Data source: Computed from Census of India 2011.

Table 1 shows that the highest number of towns have emerged in the Aravalli Range of Rajasthan along with Semi-Arid Transitional Plain. Sandy arid Marusthali is the largest physiographic region of Rajasthan but is the lowest when it comes to the emergence of Census towns. Thus, it can be seen that physiography has not determined the pattern of urbanization in the state in a holistic manner.

Size Class Distribution of Newly Emerged Census Towns

Towns in India have been classified according to the census of India into six types of classes. This classification is based on the population of the town. More than 70 percent of the total urban population resides in class I and class II towns in Rajasthan. Class III, IV, V, and VIth are left with only 30 percent of the total urban population. It would be interesting to know the class pattern of newly emerged census towns. More than 80 percent of total newly emerged census towns belong to class IVth and class Vth category of towns. That means majority of the newly emerged census towns have a population between 5000 to 20000 persons. Providing urban amenities to this size of population in an economically feasible, environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive manner is a great challenge.

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Table 2: Size Class Distribution of Newly Emerged Census Towns (Rajasthan 2001-11)

Size Class Distribution		
Size Class	Number of Towns	% of Total
Class 3 (20,000 to 49,999 population)	7	08.64
Class 4 (10,000 to 19,999 population)	31	38.27
Class 5 (5000 to 9,999 population)	36	44.44
Class 6 (less than 5,000 population)	7	08.64

Data source: Computed from Census of India 2011.

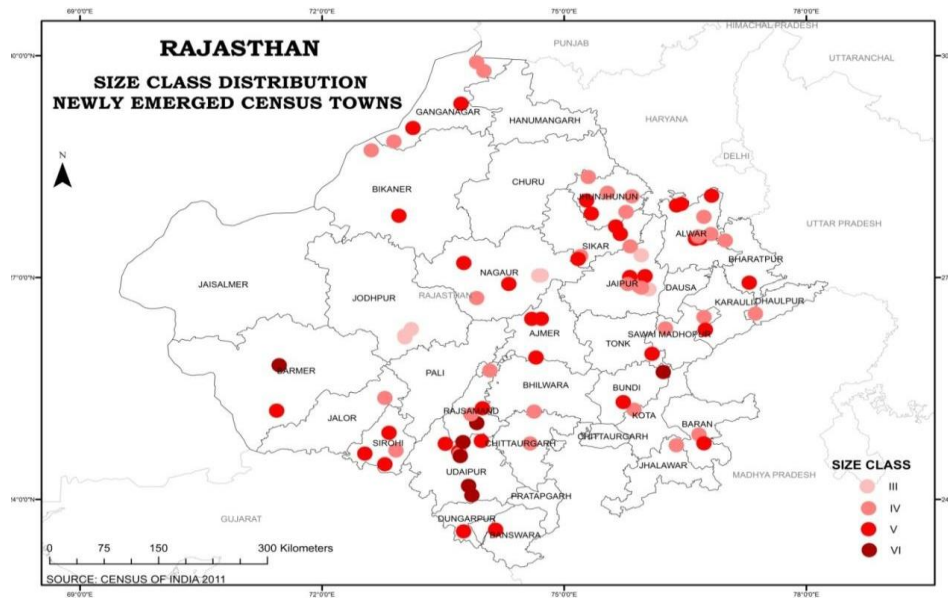


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Conclusion

Although physiography plays an important role, it has been denied as a strong reason for the urbanization process, development, infrastructure progress, and industrialization. Instead of this, transport network has come out as a strong determinant to the emergence of census towns in the state.

***Associate Professor
Department of Geography
M.S.J. Govt. P.G. College,
Bharatpur (Raj.)**

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